



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 7, 2002

S. 2431

Mychal Judge Police and Fire Chaplains Public Safety Officers' Benefit Act of 2002

As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on May 2, 2002

CBO estimates that enacting S. 2431 would increase direct spending by about \$2 million in fiscal year 2002 and by less than \$500,000 in each year thereafter. Because the bill would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. S. 2431 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

For incidents occurring on or after September 11, 2001, S. 2431 would make chaplains of fire and police departments eligible for the benefits available to public safety officers who have died or who have been permanently disabled as a result of injuries sustained in the line of duty. Under current law, the families of public safety officers who have died as a result of such injuries are eligible for a payment of \$250,000. Officers who have been permanently disabled are eligible for the same payment; however, this payment is subject to the availability of appropriations. Based on information from the Department of Justice, CBO estimates that this provision of S. 2431 would cost less than \$500,000 annually because it is extremely rare for a police or fire chaplain to be killed in the line of duty. There was one fire department chaplain killed in the September 11th attacks in New York: Father Mychal Judge.

In addition, for incidents occurring on or after September 11, 2001, S. 2431 would expand the list of eligible recipients for the \$250,000 death benefit. The bill would allow for payments to individuals that are named on a deceased officer's life insurance policy other than spouses, children, and parents, who currently are eligible to receive the \$250,000 payment.

Of the approximately 450 public safety officers killed in the September 11th attacks, there are 10 individuals known to have died without spouses, children, or parents, so the \$250,000 death benefit will not be paid under current law. Based on information from the Department of Justice and from associations representing police officers and firefighters, CBO expects that a majority of the 10 deceased individuals had life insurance policies, thus the

beneficiaries of those policies would be eligible for a \$250,000 payment under S. 2431. We estimate that enacting S. 2431 would increase direct spending by about \$2 million in fiscal year 2002.

For fiscal year 2003 and subsequent years, CBO estimates that S. 2431 would cost less than \$500,000 annually for death benefits paid to life insurance beneficiaries. The events of September 11, 2001, resulted in an unusually high number of public safety officer deaths that affect federal payments in fiscal year 2002; in most years, payments to survivors of public safety officers have numbered about 200. It is very unusual for an officer to die in the line of duty with no spouse, children, or parents, according to associations for police officers and firefighters. Aside from the 10 cases resulting from the attacks of September 11, 2001, there have been no such cases reported in recent years.

On March 28, 2002, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 3297, the Mychal Judge Police and Fire Chaplains Public Safety Officers' Benefit Act of 2001, as ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on March 7, 2002. The two bills are very similar, and the cost estimates are identical.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.